

Special Report

Same Ol' Niroomand?

More Sketchy Travel Spending from Former CoB Associate Dean

The USMNEWS.net news office continues to sort through piles of official documents regarding activities at USM. Those same piles also include official documentation about activities at other institutions of higher learning. This *Special Report* concerns some of those. Take a moment and examine the travel voucher inserted at the end of this report. It is a University of Houston – Victoria travel voucher regarding a June-2010 trip made by UHV b-school dean Farhang Niroomand, the former associate dean of business at USM, *back to Hattiesburg, MS*, in order to “attend the Omicron Delta Epsilon event.”

As the voucher points out, Niroomand’s trip back to his old stomping grounds covered the 17th, 18th, 19th, 20th, and 21st of June-2010. UHV funds in the amount of a whopping \$1,400 were used to reimburse Niroomand for this particular trip. The benefit to UHV of Niroomand’s travel in this instance is indicated to have been “[t]o attend as Executive Treasurer of the Omicron Delta Epsilon.” Sources tell USMNEWS.net that there are a number of troubling aspects to this particular trip. For one, if Niroomand is travelling as a high-ranking official of Omicron Delta Epsilon, the international economics honor society, why did UHV reimburse Niroomand for this trip, and not ODE? Clearly ODE has resources for just this purpose, yet they were ignored by Niroomand in seeking financial support for this trip.

A second troubling aspect of this story noted by sources is that USM has never had anything like an “ODE event,” not to mention one that lasted three to five days like the one listed by Niroomand on this travel voucher. Third, at the time of this so-called ODE event, USM did not really have any economists left. The CoB’s economics major had been cut, and five senior economists had been forced to retire after 2009-10 in order to save four mostly junior economics professors. Three of these four junior professors had already, by June-2010, taken new jobs elsewhere. The remaining one was reportedly out of the state and planning never to return to teaching at USM. Only a small few of those retiring were left hanging around, doing some final teaching during the first summer term.

USMNEWS.net contributor Victoria Tyler told USMNEWS.net that, with this particular trip, it appears as though Niroomand simply wanted to visit a few of his former colleagues, and his former home base, at a critical point in their professional lives. A few of those forced into retirement were close friends. According to Tyler, Niroomand perhaps wanted to discuss the possibility of

bringing one or two of them out west to UHV. Given the context of this report above, it would seem that Tyler's conjectures are on point, and that this "ODE event" trip was based, officially, on a bogus premise.

University of Houston Victoria

Travel Request

T. S. Niro 06/11/10

Business Unit: 00765 Date MM/DD/YY: 06/15/10

Name of Traveler Farhang Niroomand Title: Dean, School of Business

Department: School of Business Administration Traveler's Phone# 361-570-4248

Department Contact: Mary Field Dept Contact Phone # 361-570-4248

Classification of Traveler (check one)

Faculty Staff Prospective Employee Student

Other _____ Passengers (list name(s)) _____

Designated Headquarters UHV 3007 N. Ben Wilson Victoria, TX

Departure City/State/Country Victoria, TX USA Destination City/State/Country Hattiesburg, MS

Departure Date MM/DD/YY: 06/17/10 Return Date MM/DD/YY: 06/21/10

Purpose/Benefit of Travel	<u>Purpose</u>
	To Attend: <u>To attend the Omicron Delta Epsilon event</u>
(Location)	City: <u>Hattiesburg</u> State/Country: <u>Mississippi</u>
<u>Benefit to University</u>	<u>To attend as the Executive Treasurer of the Omnicron Delta Epsilon</u>

<u>Estimated Travel Expenditures</u>	<u>Local Funds</u>	+	<u>State Funds</u>	=	<u>Total Funds</u>
Travel Expenses direct billed to UHV	_____	+	_____	=	<u>0.00</u>
Hotel expenses direct-billed to UHV	_____	+	_____	=	<u>0.00</u>
Travel expenses to be reimbursed by UHV	<u>1,400.00</u>	+	_____	=	<u>1,400.00</u>
Total expenditures to be paid or reimbursed by UHV	<u>\$1,400.00</u>	+	<u>\$0.00</u>	=	<u>\$1,400.00</u>

Type of Expenses:

Fund	DeptID	Prog	Proj	Speed Type	Amount
<u>2064</u>	<u>V0019</u>	<u>A0304</u>	<u>NA</u>	<u>10551</u>	<u>\$1,400.00</u>
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

Estimated cost of travel below:

Fund	DeptID	Prog	Proj	Speed Type	Amount
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

Signatures

Signature	Date MM/DD/YY
Supervisor (Required) = <u>[Signature]</u>	<u>6/15/10</u>
Certifying Signatory for the Cost Center (Required) = <u>[Signature]</u>	<u>6/16/10</u>
Contract/Grant Approval (if applicable) = _____	_____
President, Provost, or VP For Admin & Finance (if required) = _____	_____
Chancellor or designee (if required) = _____	_____
Finance Travel Analyst (if Applicable) = _____	_____